

## Durham Research Online

---

### Deposited in DRO:

01 November 2019

### Version of attached file:

Accepted Version

### Peer-review status of attached file:

Peer-reviewed

### Citation for published item:

Stammers, Thomas (2019) 'Old French and new money : Jews and the aesthetics of the Old Regime in transnational perspective, c.1860–1910.', *Journal of modern Jewish studies.*, 18 (4). pp. 489-512.

### Further information on publisher's website:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14725886.2019.1658945>

### Publisher's copyright statement:

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor Francis in *Journal of modern Jewish studies* on 4 September 2019 available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/14725886.2019.1658945>

### Additional information:

---

## Use policy

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in DRO
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full DRO policy](#) for further details.

## Old French and New Money: Jews and the aesthetics of the Old Regime in transnational perspective, c.1860-1910

Tom Stammers

At the dawn of the twentieth century, styles synonymous with the French old regime were hailed as the epitome of good taste. French fashions from the reigns of Louis XIV, Louis XV and Louis XVI had become an international luxury brand, the proliferation of which seemed to announce the rise of “new money” and transatlantic alliances. This was a defiantly cosmopolitan and opulent style of building and decorating, which was often dissonant with its immediate surroundings. Taking the example of Oldway Mansion in Devon, created by the American entrepreneur Isaac Merritt Singer in the 1870s and transformed by his son Paris Eugène Singer in the 1890s into a the “Versailles of the West Country”- this article reflects on the elusive but pervasive contribution of Jews to the popularity of French revivalist styles in the *fin-de-siècle*. It argues for recognising the entanglement of Jewishness with other national and class identities and insists on considering not just the identity of the patron or the architect, but the wider network of artists, decorators and art dealers who specialized in recreating the elegance of the old regime. In turn, this entails adopting a transnational perspective, placing houses like Oldway in dialogue with comparable structures and decorative schemes in Britain, France and the United States. It argues that Jewish patrons and art professionals helped establish historic French styles as a preferred way for newcomers to signal their arrival within a dynamic, cosmopolitan elite.

In his important monograph on architecture in the era of emancipation, Frédéric Bedoire pleaded: “I am not trying to answer the question of what a quintessentially Jewish architecture looks like. It is as difficult to answer that question as it is to sort out what is Jewish about the Jews.” Debunking the idea of stylistic essentialism, Bedoire urges us to consider Jewish architecture not just in its deviations from the norm, but also in its borrowings and adaptations. Self-consciously progressive, he argues that Jewish domestic architecture from around Europe in the nineteenth century was characterized by its eclecticism, its comfort and its eye for luxury.<sup>1</sup> The ‘Jewishness’ of a building did not inhere in any single attribute, then, or uniform style, but can more fruitfully be thought of in terms

of the relationships between and across different categories of actor: not just the identity of the architect, but also the clients, the decorators and the gardeners involved; not just the intrinsic meaning of any one particular architectural style, so much as how that style was adapted within and transferred across a social network.

Taking this expansive view entails considering Jews not as a people apart but as enmeshed within a broad milieu, and whose aesthetic preferences paralleled and sometimes reproduced that of other emergent, non-Jewish social groups. The late nineteenth century heralded flux and diversification in the composition of the social hierarchy, even if we should not exaggerate the sudden breakthrough of Jewish wealth. Even in the Edwardian heyday, only 2.7% of top wealth holders (those leaving over £100,000 in their estates) were definitely Jewish (and a maximum of 5% possibly so).<sup>2</sup> Caveats aside, however, contemporaries believed that they were witnessing a decisive shift towards the role of money as a determinant of status. Todd Endelman has underlined how the surge in attacks on plutocracy- often anti-Semitic in character- mirrored the “growing visibility of successful businessmen in national life and their challenge to what were seen as traditional English values,” a resentment compounded by “lavish spending and opulent display.”<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere in his research, Endelman has argued that Jewish investment in aesthetics could represent a “flight” from their cultural heritage, since the idealised appreciation of the fine-arts allowed embarrassed connoisseurs like Bernard Berenson to overcome the stain of grubby materialism.<sup>4</sup> Yet reducing aesthetics to a self-denying strategy of assimilation overlooks how far Jews brought their own distinct inflection to the revival of past styles, transforming the scale on which they were realised and the associations with which they were imbued, and in the process often making Jews more- not less- conspicuous within their social environment.

In what follows, our focus will be on Jewish engagement with historical styles imported from across the Channel, especially the arts of the *ancien régime*. The boundary between these styles was fluid, with many opting for a “tutti Louis” confection in which elements of Louis XIV, Louis XV, Louis XVI and even the Empire were idiosyncratically mashed together.<sup>5</sup> It was hard to disentangle the appeal of French furniture of the 1740s, say, or the 1770s, from the dramatic reinterpretation of such furniture produced a century later. Artful reproductions and original pieces were typically juxtaposed, combining the hallowed forms of seventeenth and eighteenth-century design with modern standards of comfort and convenience. In the eyes of mid-Victorian observers, and subsequent architectural critics, going French was one hallmark of new money. Mark Girouard baptised the triumph of French fashions after 1850 the “nouveau riche style.”<sup>6</sup> The genesis of French revivalism began a generation earlier within the circle of the Prince Regent and the reactionary nostalgia of Tory grandees, as witnessed in the rococo finishings undertaken at Belvoir Castle (home of the duke of Rutland) and Wrest Park (home of the Earl de Grey). Following Michael Hall’s astute analysis:

The French monarchy and aristocracy had largely been obliterated, their palaces and chateaux pillaged, and their collections thrown on the market. By contrast, the landowning classes in England were flourishing. There was a sense, therefore, that the English aristocracy was self-consciously continuing the severed traditions of its French counterparts- an idea given physical expression in the new Francophile interiors they created out of the paintings, sculpture, bronzes, furniture, tapestries and porcelain displaced by revolution and war. Ambitious purchasers even acquired fine *boiseries* with which to fit out their new rooms in French style.<sup>7</sup>

Such appropriations, as Diana Davis' exciting research has underscored, created the conditions for the Anglo-Gallic interior, a style disseminated by dealers in the first half of the century and perfected by the English Rothschilds.<sup>8</sup> Yet if Regency aristocrats and financiers had led the way, by the 1830s and 1840s pattern-books full of French motifs had captured the middle-class consumer market, reinforcing the 'bourgeois' connotations of the style, and driving new forms of distinction.<sup>9</sup>

At first glance, the Jewish fascination with the old regime seems confusing, even perverse. After all, the Jews owed their civil emancipation to the French Revolution, and the celebration of 1789 was encoded within Jewish citizenship.<sup>10</sup> In France, some of the most outspoken devotees of the eighteenth century were uncompromising royalists and Catholics, for whom the Jews embodied the destructive agents of modernity.<sup>11</sup> But in the act of translation, Jews on both sides of the Channel changed the associations of old regime styles, divesting them of reactionary politics, foregrounding their aesthetic qualities, and recombining them in unexpected, often ludic, ways. Juliet Carey had observed that the theatrical and eclectic collections Ferdinand de Rothschild assembled at Waddesdon Manor suggest "a more ironic, essentially Liberal, approach to French history."<sup>12</sup> Whilst the intellectual history of Jewish engagement with the French eighteenth century remains to be explored, its material dimensions can be inferred through the study of architecture and collecting. Sir Francis Montefiore did not just publish a life of Marie-Antoinette's favourite, the Princesse de Lamballe, in 1896, but also decorated the walls of Worth Park with French furnishings (including seats with Beauvais covers and Aubusson tapestries) as well as original prints after Watteau, Coypel, Lancret and Boilly.<sup>13</sup> British Jewish collectors played a distinguished role in championing French eighteenth-century aesthetics, whether in Ralph Bernal's superb set of Sèvres and historical portraits, or the porcelain-mounted furniture

assembled by Charles Mills, baron Hillingdon (partner in the firm of Glynn, Mills & Currie), or the truly outstanding collection of French eighteenth-century illustrated books and ingenious clocks by Bréguet assembled by David Lionel Salomons at Broomhill, outside Tunbridge Wells. In 1903, Lady Fitzgerland- born Amelia Catherine Bischoffsheim- reportedly commissioned a replica of Marie-Antoinette's bedroom at Versailles to be installed in her new residence, Buckland House in Berkshire.<sup>14</sup>

Driven by a mix of intellectual appeal and fashionable taste, this unexpected Jewish interest in the French old regime merits further investigation. It complicates the assumption that successful Jews always conformed to the "feudal" ideals of the British landed classes, since these properties were defiantly and extravagantly foreign. Moreover, this foreignness was compounded by the popularity of the style with other newcomers into the British establishment, including South African millionaires (erroneously assumed to all be Jewish) and wealthy Americans. A quick glimpse through the plush interiors captured by society photographer Harry Bedford Lemere in the 1890s and 1900s reveals that the Louis XVI style had become "the favourite style among the very rich throughout most of the period." Evocations of the old regime could be found in London town houses- such as those belonging to Carl Meyer, first chairman of De Beers, on Hill Street, Mr Arthur Paget and his American wife on West Halkin Street, the metallurgist businessman Robert Mond on Berkeley Square and Leopold Albu, the chairman of Phoenix Oil, on Hamilton Place- as well as in country residences [Fig.1]. Having adopted Louis XVI fashions already in their town house on Grosvenor Place, George Cooper and his Illinois-born wife Mary Cooper transformed the ballroom at Hursley Park in Hampshire with the addition of authentic period panelling and Beauvais tapestries based on Boucher's designs for *Les beaux pastorales*, purchased from the Jewish dealer Joseph Duveen.<sup>15</sup> The triumph of flashy

French taste in London had clear parallels in Berlin too, as can be gleaned from the photographic record of interiors belonging to the city's *fin-de-siècle* collectors, including Jewish connoisseurs such as Eduard Simon and Hermine Feist.<sup>16</sup>

In this matrix of rich clients, architects, dealers and decorators, men and women of Jewish background rubbed shoulders and overlapped with European and American plutocrats, captains of industry and financial brokers. In Britain, one common denomination was the friendship of the notoriously Francophile Prince of Wales, who emblemized and encouraged the shake-up within high society.<sup>17</sup> As Countess Warwick candidly confessed fifty years later: "We resented the introduction of Jews into the social set of the Prince of Wales; not because we disliked them individually... but because they had brains and understood finance. As a class we did not like brains. As for money, our only understanding lay in the spending, not in the making of it."<sup>18</sup> The aversion towards the excess of French fashions has been documented in relation to the elusive *goût Rothschild*.<sup>19</sup> For its critics, the luxuriance of French taste in Rothschild houses was synonymous with the *parvenu*, who invariably stood accused of going too far, or trying too hard, to imitate the true-born aristocratic manner. Lord Crawford was so appalled by the "overpowering ostentation and vulgarity" he found at Tring, Nathaniel Rothschild's French-style château, that he vowed never to stay again in one of the "big Jewish houses."<sup>20</sup> Yet beyond the Rothschild dynasty, similar odium was directed by Beatrice Webb at Bath House, the London home of Randlord Julius Wernher and his social-climber wife:

Though our host was superior to his wealth, our hostess and his guests were dominated by it.... The company was composed, either of financial magnates, or of the hangers-on of magnates. The setting in the way of rooms and flowers and fruit

and food and wine and music, and pictures and works of art, was hugely  
overdone....<sup>21</sup>

If one constant riff in British anti-Semitic discourse was “resentment at, and infractions of, social distance”, then it is unsurprising that Jewish “tactlessness” found its counterpart in showy, excessive interiors and alien architecture.<sup>22</sup> Gilded French finery defied the vernacular trends launched by the Arts and Crafts revival, not to mention the austerity of the old Manor House, elevated in the pages of *Country Life* during the 1890s and 1900s into “icons of national identity, of historical, political and social continuity.”<sup>23</sup> No wonder critics at the time and subsequently have tended to view French royal styles degenerating as they move into new geographical contexts, shedding their native elegance and descending into “the coarse and oppressive.”<sup>24</sup>

Yet among many international admirers, French-inspired houses and interiors appealed because of their cosmopolitan complexion, sumptuous finish, and often self-consciously dissonance from their immediate surroundings. To explore some of their qualities, this article is going to focus on one remarkable property whose transformation by Isaac Merritt Singer and his son Paris Eugène spans two phases of engagement with French styles. Oldway Manor in Paignton, Devon, began life in the early 1870s as an early expression of the import of Second Empire eclecticism, whether in its architectural ornament (derived from the French Renaissance) or the theatricality and luxuriance of its interiors. Then in the 1890s and 1900s it morphed into a more rigorous emulation of the grammar of Louis XIV and Louis XVI (although given a Napoleonic twist). These two phases of building highlight the porousness of French historical styles in Britain, in which motifs



from the Valois and the Bourbons were mingled together or superimposed, whilst also foregrounding the enduring unease that their flagrant cosmopolitanism aroused.

The creators of Oldway were of probable Jewish heritage, although they do not seem to have attached much importance to this fact and no-one spoke of Oldway as a Jewish property. Yet if it was not a Jewish Country House in its own right, studying the social world to which the Singers belonged, and some of their cultural choices, can illuminate how many rich Jews around 1900 invested in French styles of housebuilding and home-decorating. Methodologically speaking, this essay interrogates a house whose Jewish links are ambiguous and works outwards from it to uncover points of connection and analogy with Jewish and non-Jewish networks and residences dotted throughout Britain, France and the United States. Dominique Jarrassé insists that Jewish creativity should be understood through the “interaction with other cultures, indeed the hybridity” displayed by feats of appropriation.<sup>25</sup> The value of Oldway lies in this very hybridity- in terms of both building styles and markers of identity- affording an indirect window onto the curious global phenomenon by which new money embraced the old regime. The essay falls into two parts: first, an overview of how the Singer family created and extended Oldway in light of their European experiences; second, a consideration of the connections and resemblances which link Oldway to broader revivalist initiatives by Jews and non-Jews alike.

### **The Singers: A Transnational Family**

Unlike typical Jewish country houses, Oldway Mansion was not built in the shires, but rather belonged to the Torquay Riviera; its once substantial grounds have been swallowed up by the encroaching seaside town. Isaac Merritt Singer was a nineteenth-century celebrity, whose life “bespoke big dreams, outsized curiosity, enormous wealth, and

huge appetites.”<sup>26</sup> The sewing machine he patented in 1851 became a global brand and enthroned him among self-made millionaires. Biographers remain divided on the question of Singer’s ancestry. Isaac’s father was born around Frankfurt Adam Reisinger, of Hungarian and Jewish heritage; he emigrated to the United States either from Heilbronn in 1769, or from the Rhenish Palatinate in 1803.<sup>27</sup> On arrival he abbreviated his surname, worked as a millwright and married a Dutch Lutheran, Ruth Benson. Isaac was born to the couple at Pittsdown, New York, in 1811. There is no evidence that before about 1905 any of the Singer family thought much about their European background; to cite a letter from his son William: “our dear Father, Isaac Merritt Singer, never for a moment failed to claim and insist (no matter where he happened to be temporarily) that he was an American citizen and always in fact an American.”<sup>28</sup> Isaac personally had minimal instruction in any faith, and seemingly possessed no religious scruples. He avoided discussing his family background partly to mask his chaotic romantic life: between two legal wives, a common-law wife of 25 years, and numerous mistresses, Isaac fathered a total of twenty-four children in and out of wedlock.

Whatever his actual ancestry, Singer was often presumed to be Jewish. His surname matched prominent Jewish families: think of Simeon Singer in London (English translator of the Siddur), or the descendants of David Singer in Paris (French cotton merchant and philanthropist). Even today, his name still crops up in dictionaries of the Jewish diaspora, and Bedoire describes Singer Sewing Machine Company as an unambiguous “Jewish firm”, a connection reinforced by the centrality of his invention for the Jewish garment industry.<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, one of Singer’s lesser known patented inventions was an 1838 matzo-dough rolling machine.<sup>30</sup> Rather than try to pin-point the extent of Singer’s Jewishness, the interest of his story comes from how easily he moved between and complicated conventional markers of class and nationality, including ‘foreigner’, ‘American’ and ‘entrepreneur’. This

slipperiness was mirrored in his children; for example, his daughter Alice, raised in the United States, later presented herself as an actress under the name Agnes Leonard and claimed to be descended from a “good old English family”.<sup>31</sup>

In the last decade of his life, Singer relocated to Paris, the home of his new wife, Isabelle Eugénie Boyer. Thirty years his junior, she was the daughter of a French confectioner, and bore him six children- including Winnaretta, Paris Eugène and Isabella-Blanche. From 1866 they lived on the boulevard Malesherbes near the Park Monceau, an address popular with other American expatriates in the city, notably the Jerome sisters.<sup>32</sup> In 1870 the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War sent both families fleeing to London, where they settled in Brown’s hotel. After a few weeks of rest, Isaac was urged on health grounds to take his exhausted wife to Torquay, the jewel of the so-called English Riviera. A combination of greater time for leisure, improved rail links, and medical tourism fuelled the growth in middle-class visits to English seaside resorts, and the Devon coast benefitted from a number of royal visits, including Victoria and Albert in 1852, the Queen of Holland in 1869 and even the exiled and ailing Napoleon III in September 1871.<sup>33</sup> Genteel and fashionable, Singer liked the town and decided to stay. Having failed to buy Isambard Kingdom Brunel’s estate at Watcombe, he resolved to move further up the coast to the village of Paignton, where he bought the property known as Little Oldway, and began its transformation.

On the one hand, Oldway was intended to be defiantly American: Singer dubbed his folly the Wigwam and the roof was topped by a carving of a Native American firing a bow and arrow.<sup>34</sup> Yet in contrast to the predominant Italianate architecture nearby, Singer wanted something Gallic, no doubt impressed by his residency in Haussmann’s Paris. Oldway thus belongs to the new crop of French-themed buildings springing up on English

soil in the 1850s and 1860s [Fig.2]. For the exteriors, British architects sought inspiration in the renovation of Loire valley chateaux, the Hôtel-de-Ville in Paris and the completion of the Louvre and Tuileries complex, each marvels of French Renaissance decoration. For the interiors, French eighteenth-century styles were believed to epitomise the art of fine living, as showcased at metropolitan hotels such as the Grosvenor and Charing Cross, where evocations of the past met up-to-date amenities. These influences pervaded Alfred Waterhouse's dramatic work for the Duke of Westminster at Eaton Hall, which was turned at "truly colossal" expense into a monument of "domestic organisation and regimented comfort."<sup>35</sup> Leading industrialists like Thomas Brassey and John Corbett led the way in transplanting metropolitan fashions to the English countryside; the latter had the Louis XIII château Impney in Worcestershire designed by Auguste Tronquois.<sup>36</sup> Further proof of the inroads of an eclectic French taste, mixing period details and Second Empire padding and swagger, could be founded in the modifications introduced by Henry Isaac Butterfield at Cliffe Hall near Keighley in Yorkshire. A successful textile merchant, Butterfield had an American fortune through his wife- the daughter of Judge Roosevelt in New York- and maintained homes in Nice and Paris, where he was entertained at court. According to his alarmed son Frederick, at Cliffe Hall Henry Butterfield "proceeded to fill the new building with every costly detail his Parisian experiences could suggest- from a malachite mantlepiece, once the proud possession of Prince Demidoff of San Donato fame, to an ornate crystal mirror, said to have been given to Ninon d'Enclos by Louis XIV; covering besides the whole gamut of pictures, tapestries, statuary, bronzes, porcelains, and every description of furniture, plate and ornament."<sup>37</sup>

This importation of Second Empire aesthetics made sense biographically and temperamentally for self-made men, several of whom had made fortunes in France. The

regime of Napoleon III had encouraged new forms of capital investment and manufacturing growth, and this was paralleled by the crop of châteaux remodelled by French industrialists. By the 1860s Madame de Baritault in her diary could complain that the Gironde was being taken over by upstart Protestants and Jews.<sup>38</sup> In British public opinion, however, the Second Empire was regarded with a great deal of suspicion, not simply for its expansionist foreign policy, but its perceived brashness and moral decadence. For some, the opulent French style seemed more suited to urban comfort than rural retreat; and those British Jews who did buy country residences tended to favour solidly English, Jacobean manors, such as Sir Isaac Lyon Goldschmid's purchase of Somerhill in Tonbridge.<sup>39</sup> The few exceptions to this rule only underscored why French styles retained in the 1860s "slightly raffish associations".<sup>40</sup> The Irish-Jewish founder of the Crédit Mobilier in England, baron Albert Grant (born Abraham Gottheimer in Dublin), opted for Gothic design for his 1865 country seat at Coopers Hill, near Egham, Surrey. But he insisted that Kensington House was built for him by James Knowles in a flamboyant French classical style with a Mansard roof. Following revelations of corrupt business practice, and saddled with debts and lawsuits, Grant was forced to sell the house at auction in 1878, when the huge marble staircase was acquired by Madame Tussaud.<sup>41</sup>

Returning to Oldway, Isaac Singer demanded authenticity from local Torquay architect, George Soudon Bridgman, who until then had specialized in hotels. Bridgman in 1872 was dispatched to visit France to make on-the-spot studies of historic sites. Singer also demanded the latest comforts and conveniences, especially central heating systems familiar in the United States, and was willing to spend £100,000 to fashion the Wigwam according to his demanding specifications.<sup>42</sup> The most unusual aspect of the property were a riding pavilion and a fully working theatre on the ground floor to cater to Singer's long-standing

love of the stage, including a past stint in a touring troupe. It was the first design by Bridgman's young assistant, Frank Matcham, who would go on to build over eighty theatres throughout Britain.<sup>43</sup> This was an eccentric house, and the Torquay gentry kept a wary distance from Singer's grandiose parties, fancy-dress entertainments and circus shows. Yet on his death in 1875 Isaac was mourned in a lavish funeral by many working-class men and women who had benefited from his hospitality or his employment.<sup>44</sup>

After the funeral Isabelle returned to Paris and lived on the avenue Kléber, in a house built by an American couple, the Phalens. "Like most such houses at that time," Winnaretta recalled in her memoirs, "this contained a great many large reception rooms, some furnished in the Louis Seize or Empire styles then fashionable, and others in the Sarah Bernhardt manner."<sup>45</sup> Isabelle's affection for the *ancien régime* can be seen in the watercolour portrait painted of her by Madeleine Lemaire, an important Parisian *salonnière* who shared her passion for music.<sup>46</sup> The wealthy widow remarried a Belgian violinist, who used her money to buy a ducal title from the king of Italy (styling himself the duc de Camposelice) and amassed historic musical instruments. The salon at avenue Kléber held weekly concerts from the city's finest chamber musicians, and this environment nurtured Winnaretta's lifelong passion for modern French music, beginning with her friendship with Gabriel Fauré.<sup>47</sup> Isabelle Singer succeeded in engineering brilliant matches for her daughters. Isabella-Blanche married Jean, duc de Decazes to the bemusement and satire of the New York press.<sup>48</sup> Younger sister Winnaretta was married first in 1887 to the duc de Sceaux-Montbéliard, scion of a Protestant noble family. After this union failed a more mutually convenient match was struck with the traveller and aesthete Edmond, prince de Polignac, who shared her homosexuality and love of contemporary music. During the Dreyfus affair, the prince was a passionate supporter of the captain's innocence, and the couple socialised

with figures in Parisian Jewish high society (which he jokingly called “the syndicate”) including the baron and baroness Adolph de Meyer, Reynaldo Hahn and Proust.<sup>49</sup>

These glittering marriages had consequences for the status of Oldway, too. Isaac’s elder sons in England threw themselves into sports -- horse-racing, aviation, yachting -- but the Cambridge-educated Paris Eugène Singer conceived of himself as an architect. In 1897 Paris decided to move back into Oldway and turn his father’s Victorian villa into a temple to French royal taste. First, he had an impressive colonnade added to the façade, inspired by Gabriel’s work at the Place de la Concorde. Next, he invited the father and son team of Achille and Henri Duchêne to transform the lawns into French-style parterres [Fig.3]. Statues, sphinxes, urns, a lake, even a grotto were faithfully reproduced from the Petit Trianon gardens, whilst the German-born naturalist, F.W. Meyer, created a grotto and lakes. Inside Oldway, Paris went further in resurrecting Versailles. He ordered a recreation of Louis XIV’s Ambassadors staircase, long since demolished, using coloured marble sourced from the original quarry. The painted ceiling above was a direct imitation of Charles Lebrun, and at the top of the staircase hung the mammoth oil painting known as *Le Sacre de Napoléon* (but which more accurately depicts the coronation of Joséphine) [Fig.4]. This was a replica version painted by Jacques-Louis David himself in the 1820s and bought by Paris in auction in 1898.<sup>50</sup>

By the later nineteenth century, the popularity of French fashions with the middle classes led to criticism of “vulgar” copying and “over-elaborate decoration”, sparking the return to vernacular styles.<sup>51</sup> These were viewed as not just more pleasing but also more moral; William Morris thundered against eighteenth-century French art for embodying the “successful and exultant rascality” that thankfully “went down to the pit forever” in 1789.<sup>52</sup>

In the hands of the very rich, however, old regime idioms were refined in the *fin-de-siècle* towards harmony, light and simplicity compared to the dark and cluttered spaces of the mid-Victorian home. Even the middle-class commentator Mary Eliza Haweis in *The Art of Decoration* (1881) went so far as to describe the "Louis Quatorze" style seen at its best as "the most elegant and the most scientific....voluptuous without being inane, and graceful without visible affectation (unlike what followed)."<sup>53</sup> Many of the French-themed houses of the 1890s testified to the importation of European craftsmen and architects, as well as the rise of the professional interior decorators who turned the home into a "total work of art".<sup>54</sup> The boundary between architect, furniture makers and interior decorator was increasingly indistinct at firms like Charles Mellier & Co, whose French name belied the lack of Parisian premises. In addition to manufacturing high quality French reproduction furniture, and providing full suites of luxury fabrics and upholstery, Mellier brought a sense of Louis XVI elegance to Edwardian homes such as West Dean (belonging to the American Willie James) and the Adam-dominated Manderston (belonging to Sir James Miller), where they fitted a silver balustrade on the staircase inspired by the Petit Trianon.<sup>55</sup>

In the same way, the main thrust at Oldway was not archaeological but evocative, mixing authentic artworks with a whimsical re-combination of elements. Paul Hawthorne has correctly emphasized the similarity between Oldway and the cult of the Sun King pursued by Ludwig II at the Bavarian Versailles of Herrenchiemsee.<sup>56</sup> Like the Bavarian monarch, Paris was a keen Wagnerian -- indeed, his lover Isadora Duncan referred to him only as "Lohengrin" in her memoirs -- and he saw in historicist styles the means to create a fantasy in stone, the gilded stage-set on which to act out his dreams. With some justice, Ruth Braddon observed: "In him the capitalist romance- in all its senses- found its apotheosis." <sup>57</sup>



## The Global Circulation of French Styles

As should be clear, Oldway was in no obvious sense a Jewish house. Isaac Merritt Singer was buried a Christian, as was his bride Isabella, and the children grew up with no sense of this ancestry, even if outsiders often imputed it to them. “It was widely assumed among many in the aristocracy,” writes her biographer, “that WSP [Winnaretta Polignac-Singer] was of Jewish origins, even though both of her parents were brought up more or less in the Protestant faith.”<sup>58</sup> In his 1965 book *Les Juifs*, Roger Peyrefitte cited Winnaretta as representative of French Jewish investment in musical institutions.<sup>59</sup> Yet thinking about Jewishness only in terms of the biography of the owners is a limiting perspective. Thanks to their social milieu in Europe and the United States, the Singers associated with many Jewish figures; moreover, Oldway bears striking resemblance to numerous properties either built by wealthy Jewish families around 1900, or designed and decorated by Jewish architects, dealers, craftsmen and gardeners. What seems exceptional about Oldway is qualified when we consider some of the contexts and parallels for this bombastic celebration of French artistry- contexts shaped prominently, though not exclusively, by Jewish patrons, intermediaries and tastemakers.

The most prestigious architect-designer firm in Edwardian Britain was the partnership of Charles Mewès and Arthur Davies, both of whom were non-practising Jews. Originally from the Baltic, Mewès’ family had settled in Strasbourg and escaped to Paris in 1870 at the time of the Prussian occupation. Rising to become a star graduate of the École des Beaux-Arts, he secured both important public commissions- such as the Palais des Congrès for the 1900 Exposition Universelle, for which he was awarded the Légion d’Honneur- as well as working on houses for private clients with Jewish connections, such as

the actor Lucien Guitry on the Champs de Mars and the financier Jules Porgès. His junior partner in Britain, Arthur Davies, had attended the École des Beaux-Arts aged only sixteen in 1894 and joined Mewès' firm four years later. Together they introduced "to London the classical style of the three Louis" via their iconic work on the interiors of the Carlton Hotel (a building designed by Henry Florence and the Jewish architect Lewis Henry Isaacs), the Royal Automobile Club on Pall Mall and especially the pair of Ritz hotels in Paris and London [Fig.5].<sup>60</sup> Working with upholsters and furniture-makers like Waring and Gillow, the "rigorous" Louis XVI interiors in the latter set the gold standard for comfort and luxury that was quickly aped in private homes.<sup>61</sup> Mewès and Davis found their models not just in original eighteenth-century drawings and works of art, but also in how these works of art (such as Fragonard panels or Gobelins tapestries) were redisplayed in the homes of wealthy collectors such as Isaac de Camondo and J.P. Morgan.<sup>62</sup> Mrs Ronnie Greville, an arbiter in matters of taste, and confidante of Edward VII, commissioned Mewès and Davis to make-over Polesden Lacey in "le goût Ritz", installing eighteenth-century French panelling and Louis XVI chairs in her boudoir.<sup>63</sup> After Mewès died in 1914, Davis continued to enjoy a distinguished practice, designing ocean liners, motor clubs and classrooms for the West London Synagogue, as well as becoming president of the 'Franco-British Union of Architects'.<sup>64</sup>

The success of Mewès also intersected with another important milieu in late Victorian Britain: The South African Randlords who, in a remarkably short period of time, had amassed colossal fortunes on account of the diamond and gold mines in South Africa. Settling in London in the 1890s, the Randlords were major collectors of paintings, and their townhouses were invariably decked out with French eighteenth-century furniture and paintings.<sup>65</sup> They also moved into the countryside, buying up existing Georgian or Regency

homes -- such as Tewin Water, acquired by Alfred Beit in 1902 -- but then remodelled them internally to bring them up to date.<sup>66</sup> In the torrent of criticism aimed at them from both scandalized aristocrats and indignant radicals, the Randlords as a class were routinely equated with shadowy Jewish capital, despite the fact that several of them (like Friedrich Eckstein) came from German Protestant backgrounds. Yet this confusion in identities only served to reinforce the links between perceived Jewish interlopers and *le goût Ritz*, not least as the Randlords had been major investors in César Ritz's real-estate hotel venture. Contrary to popular representations, the diamond magnate Julius Wernher was a pious Lutheran, although his wife was of Polish Jewish background (born Alice Sedgwick Mankiewicz). In London, the "socially ambitious" Lady Wernher insisted that no expense be spared in the decoration of their country residence Luton Hoo in Bedfordshire. Luton Hoo marked the lavish collaboration between Mewès as architect and Georges Hoentschel as interior decorator, a world-leading specialist in French eighteenth-century design.<sup>67</sup>

Such decorative schemes provide some comparator for the kind of Gallic opulence on show at Oldway. A similar set of affinities can be traced if we consider the gardens, which Paris Singer entrusted to the father and son team of Henri and Achille Duchêne. This enormously successful partnership revived the taste for the rectilinear, formal gardens favoured by André Le Nôtre in the seventeenth-century, reconciling garden design with rationalist architecture. This formalism explains their status as progenitors of the modernist garden.<sup>68</sup> But in his published writings and designs, Achille Duchêne railed against modern transportation, the radio and telephone for nurturing a mindless love of speed and desire for social "levelling".<sup>69</sup> A similar tension between old and new can be found in the Duchêne's client list, which numbered some jealously aristocratic families, from the comte de Greffulhe (at Bois-Boudran) and the marquis de l'Aigle (Francport) to the marquis de

Mac-Mahon (Sully) and the marquis de Breteuil (Breteuil- although the 7<sup>th</sup> marquis had married Charlotte Amélie Fould, of the Jewish finance dynasty). But it also spanned Protestant industrialists (such as Jacques Siegfried at Langeais) and Jewish bankers (notably Louis Cahen d'Anvers at the Château des Champs and Edgar Stern at La Villette).<sup>70</sup> The duo were also proudly international, taking commissions from New York society alongside their celebrated work at Blenheim and Sutherland House for the ninth duke of Marlborough and his American wife, Consuelo Vanderbilt.<sup>71</sup>

In their work on the gardens at Oldway, the Duchênes opted for direct quotations from French monuments; for example, the gateway to the estate was a replica of the Porte Sainte-Antoine at Versailles, just as the south front of Oldway was derived from the Pavillon français by the idolized figure of Ange-Jacques Gabriel [fig.6].<sup>72</sup> This literalism chimed with developments in France in the 1890s, the decade in which Versailles was resurrected as part of national patrimony. The ultimate epigone of Louis XIV taste was the “Palais du marbre rose” built on the avenue Foch for the dandy Boni de Castellane and his American heiress bride, Anna Gould. Like Oldway, it featured a replica of the Ambassadors’ staircase from Versailles, and Boni also employed the Dûchenes to restore the gardens at the Château du Marais.<sup>73</sup> In 1908 fellow dandy and poet Robert de Montesquiou seized on the chance to acquire a rival Palais Rose in Vésinet, a residence built in Grand Trianon style by the wealthy shipowner Arthur Schweitzer less than a decade before.<sup>74</sup> Closer to home, Paris Singer’s sister Winnaretta also embraced the Louis XIV style for the redesign of her home on avenue Henri-Martin, commissioning an imposing neo-Greek colonnade inspired by Alexandre Brogniart. As Elizabeth Melanson has explored, the rooms paired “theatricality” and the “latest technologies” (including a modern solarium and heated indoor pool) with “the restraint of neoclassicism.” The music salon on the second floor was loosely modelled on

the Hall of Mirrors from Versailles and was decorated with a black-and-gold mural of Apollo and the muses by Catalan artist José-Maria Sert, dubbed the “Tiepolo of the Ritz.”<sup>75</sup>

There was little that was explicitly Jewish about this aesthetic (although Sert would later work on the Rothschild château at Laversine and Philip Sassoon’s home at Port Lympne).<sup>76</sup> Both Boni de Castellane and Montesquiou were ferocious anti-Semites, and the latter accused Winnaretta of falsely appropriating the artworks of others as her own.<sup>77</sup> And yet a look at the architects who specialized in this revivalist style once again underlines the circles of Jewish patronage. Ernest Sanson, who created the Palais-Rose for Boni de Castellane, worked for the cream of the Parisian aristocracy, including numerous Jewish homes: the hôtel Ephrussi and the hôtel Bischoffsheim (both on the place des États-Unis), the hôtel Porgès (on the avenue Montaigne) and the adjoining hôtels of Maurice and Rodolphe Kann on the avenue d’Iéna. To this must be joined his work for English residents in Paris (including Sir Richard Wallace) along with beaux-arts palaces in Madrid, Buenos Aires, Córdoba (Argentina) and the Carolands estate in California.<sup>78</sup> Looking to the countryside, as Mark Girouard has observed, architects like Sanson thrived on commissions from either rich bankers and industrialists, many of whom were of Protestant or Jewish extraction, or from aristocratic families rejuvenated by the injection of new cash (often American). From 1872, the Franco-German Jewish banker Samuel von Haber commissioned Gabriel-Hippolyte Destailleur to renovate the château de Courances, inserting a copy of the iron staircase found at royal place of Fontainebleau. Between 1903 and 1905 Sanson’s apprentice René Sergent demolished the historic Château of Voisins to replace it with a modified replica of Gabriel’s École Militaire for Edmond de Fels, a Swedish nobleman armed with his wife’s sugar fortune. The almost obligatory formal gardens were added by Achille Duchêne.<sup>79</sup>

Constituting one of the most ambitious private residences of the Belle époque, the colossal dimensions of the château at Rochefort-sur-Yvelines has inexplicably been passed over by scholars [Fig.7]. It was owned by Jules Porgès who, along with the Kann brothers, provided “the internal link between European financiers and the South African diamond and gold mines.”<sup>80</sup> Of Jewish origin, Porgès was born in Prague in 1838, and worked in the Parisian jewellery trade before investing in the Kimberly mines. He ordered a Parisian townhouse on the avenue Montaigne courtesy of Sanson, complete with gardens by Duchêne. In 1898, he acquired French citizenship, and obtained the estate of Rochefort-sur-Yvelines which had previously belonged to the Rohan family. Intent on demolishing the existing structure to make way for an imposing neo-Louis XVI residence, Porgès entrusted the enormous task to Mewès, whose work he knew and admired as a part-financier for the Paris Ritz. Mewès looked for inspiration to a pure example of Parisian eighteenth-century architecture, the hôtel de Salm, but reproduced now on a monumental scale, with a colonnade fifteen metres high and accommodation to sleep the dozens of guests who would come to Rochefort for hunting or for business. “A château of great charm which had to include every modern convenience in matters of comfort, hygiene and security, in short, a true hotel inspired largely by the Paris Ritz.” Mewès reinterpreted old regime proportions with modern materials such as steel and mixed concrete (the latter derided as vulgar, “Prussian” or “Jewish” in relation to the aristocratic purity of dressed stone).<sup>81</sup> Inside, Georges Hoentschel interiors designed on the basis of authentic architectural fragments created an ideal environment for showcasing Jules Porgès’ collection of Dutch, Flemish and French paintings, as well as eighteenth-century decorative arts (reflecting Madame Porgès’ bibliophile enthusiasms and fascination for Marie-Antoinette).<sup>82</sup>

Yet if Oldway points to some European exemplars, it also chimes with developments in Isaac Merritt Singer's birthplace. Outward-looking Americans of the Gilded Age were determined to lay hold of the treasures of European high culture, and from the 1880s onwards, styled their homes around the rich traffic in artworks across the Atlantic. Eclecticism was the order of the day in a historicist medley identified as "cosmopolitan domesticity."<sup>83</sup> This traffic in salvages was overseen by firms such as the Herter brothers and Henry Watson in New York, which in turn enabled architect-designers such as Ogden Codman, Stanford White and Jules Allard (Parisian favourite of the Vanderbilts) to create spectacular private palaces. "By the late 1890s," Wayne Craven has noted "the French period room had become fashionable among Gilded Age millionaires, for the very rich wanted to live like the kings and queens of France, and the furniture that the wealthy Americans chose helped establish just the ambience they desired." William C. Whitney composed a Marie-Antoinette reception room in white and gold panels with blue brocade and Beauvais tapestries, as well as copies after Rococo painters like Nattier, Pater and Lancret.<sup>84</sup> Another duo of architects trained at the École des Beaux-Arts, Carrère and Hastings, built in 1901 a southern riposte to the Vanderbilts, Whitehall in Palm Beach, a sumptuous mansion fusing historic Bourbon styles and the revenues of Standard Oil [Fig.8].<sup>85</sup>

Even in Britain, John Cornforth attributes to American customers the growth of decorating and antique dealing in Britain "as occupations for artistic and educated people."<sup>86</sup> The best-connected dealers and decorators knew how to exploit the opportunities presented by an international clientele. In the case of the replica of the *Sacre de Napoléon*, Paris Singer bought it in the French capital from Georges Petit for the sum of 32,000 francs.<sup>87</sup> We know little about his other purchases, but he would have known the

dynamic Jewish networks in the art market around 1900. Like Mewès, the Jewish dealer Nathaniel Wildenstein relocated from Alsace to Paris in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War, going into business with another Alsatian Jewish refugee, René Gimpel; Jacques Seligmann had transferred from Frankfurt to Paris 1874, and thrived by eighteenth-century art to important Jewish collectors such as Edmond de Rothschild and especially Moïse de Camondo.<sup>88</sup> Jewish family networks proved essential as these businesses increased their sphere of operations, including opening offices in New York in the early twentieth century. Beginning first in Hull then London, the Duveen family firm gained its foothold in Paris partly through working through family channels (in this case, by inter-marriage with the Gimpels and Lowengards). Demonstrating his authority as a specialist in retailing the cream of eighteenth-century French art to plutocratic clients, Joseph Duveen gave special attention to the design of his office in Paris (located from 1907 just behind the Ritz) and on Fifth Avenue in New York in 1910. Both buildings were designed by René Sergent- architect to the Camondos- and drew on the architectural language of Gabriel at the Petit Trianon. Filled with Savonnerie carpets, Sèvres porcelain and Louis XVI chairs covered with Beauvais tapestry, the Duveen showrooms testified to the success of Jewish dealers and decorators in turning the French old regime into a transatlantic luxury brand.<sup>89</sup>

The purpose of this brief synthetic discussion has not been to pin down any single interpretive framework for Oldway, whether British, French or American; in the *fin-de-siècle* it is hard to prize these terms apart. Rather, it has been to highlight points of resemblance and connection between the design and the personnel of Oldway and other French-themed houses in Britain, France and the United States. Within this cluster of properties, the degree of Jewish participation is striking, a sign of the dramatic ascent of Jewish families into the upper echelons of European and American society. Oldway's eccentricities seem less glaring



when the house is placed within a comparative transnational framework. Anomalous in its Devon setting, Oldway owes more to Paris and Newport, the Rothschilds and the Randlords, than to anything built nearby.<sup>90</sup> By 1900, French revivalism had become a language of taste spoken not just by blue blood families, but also by the global super-rich, including Jews and Americans, who had entered their ranks. The appeal of the style came from its supersession of national and ethnic particularities, which in turn made it supremely exportable. "In its combination of comfort and opulence and its association with aristocratic ease, the style recommended itself not only to the nobility, but to anyone with aristocratic pretensions."<sup>91</sup> The indefatigable "patron" of his architects' business, Charles Mèwes also opened a firm in Cologne (run by the Swiss architect Alphonse Bischoff) and had agents in Spain and South America, notwithstanding his extensive work on ocean liners for the Hamburg Amerika Line.<sup>92</sup> This mobility in turn is reflected in the diaspora of eighteenth-century artworks in this period, whether the Oeben travelling cabinet that Porgès sent to Wernher in Kimberley in 1874 (now installed at the Ranger's House in London), or the Boucher panels acquired by Duveen at the sale of Rodolphe Kann in 1907, and sold to Henry Clay Frick.<sup>93</sup> In their perceived universalism, French decorative arts seemed the perfect props for the restless and interconnected millionaire set.

## **Conclusion**

This article has traced the changing status of French revivalist fashions from the mid-nineteenth century in Britain to their renewed splendour in the 1890s and 1900s. The creative mixture of historicist styles gave way only slowly to strict and coherent resurrections of Louis XIV or Louis XVI elements. By this later period, beaux-arts architecture and French old regime taste were established as an international currency, unmatched for

its pedigree, decorative sophistication and modern convenience. The visibility of this style indexed changes in the composition of the British elite, which was increasingly diverse in the roots of its wealth and national origins, not to mention receptive to global opportunities. Whilst the cosmopolitanism of the Edwardian era has long been associated with the avant-garde, with British artists engaging in a “polyglot” dialogue with European modernisms, it was also visible in the house-building and house-decorating schemes among the social elite as well.<sup>94</sup> In hindsight, this cosmopolitanism has been disadvantageous for the subsequent reputation and maintenance of these houses, as poignantly suggested by the parlous state of Oldway today. To build on Judith Neiswander’s argument, if the eclecticism and cosmopolitanism of the Victorian interior in the 1870s and 1880s reflected a current of political liberalism, with its emphasis on self-expression and diversity, the style came under fierce attack in the 1890s and 1900s because of its absence of defined national character.<sup>95</sup>

Often decried as foreign or pretentious, multiple Jewish histories are nonetheless entwined with this genre of private houses and their embellishment. In their appropriation and circulation of French seventeenth and eighteenth-century styles, Jewish patrons, customers and designers helped reframe the nationalist resonances of this aesthetic. As Leora Auslander has demonstrated, the identification of French Jews with the old regime was particularly intense and enduring, as they equated the familiar forms of Louis XV and Louis XVI furniture with their belonging to the French nation-state.<sup>96</sup> But Jewish intermediaries also played a central role in the international transfer of historic styles, evacuating them of reactionary nostalgia, diluting their narrow civic meanings, and asserting their value as an ideal of tasteful and civilised living for all times and places. This was a process in which Jews were only one group among other newcomers who adopted Gallic styles to simultaneously signal and mask their status within a dynamic, transnational elite.

By choosing to renovate Oldway in that ostentatious manner, and with that team of collaborators, Paris Singer recognised the domestic and foreign comparators that contemporaries would call to mind, and he asserted his right to belong to that company. Whilst the Singer family's Jewishness was attenuated, their citation and adaptation of French art and design mirrored the way that wealthy Jewish patrons across Europe expressed their singularity within the conventions of historicism. Elana Shapira has underlined the "subtle play of exposure and concealment" in how Viennese Jews at once bought into an existing repertoire of national styles but also made them their own.<sup>97</sup>

This is a cautious plea, then, for adopting an elastic approach to studying the Jewish country house. There clearly were building projects where Jewish owners and Jewish architects collaborated closely; for instance, the work of Alfred Aldrophe on behalf of the French Rothschilds, designing London townhouses but also Gustav's château at Laversine and the home of Carl Meyer's daughter, Alexandrine, at the château de la Vallière.<sup>98</sup> But then there were far more numerous other properties in which some element of Jewish financing or Jewish expertise figured, whether in its decoration, its furnishings, its collections, so that a house with seemingly marginal Jewish connections like Oldway can be inserted into and compared with broader processes of house-building and taste-making on both sides of the Channel and both sides of the Atlantic. Starting with an outlying case can highlight the places where Jewish and non-Jewish contacts and ambitions intersected. Being attentive to these connections means thinking outside of exclusive categories and following connections across borders: it seems appropriate that in the 1920s Paris Singer built himself Les Rochers villa in Cap-Ferrat and masterminded the development of Palm Beach, working alongside the architect Addison Mizner to bring historicist glamour to the Florida Riviera.<sup>99</sup> The international dissemination of old French styles at the dawn of the twentieth century

expressed not just the cultural convergence of the inter-related landed, industrial and financial elites, but also the “rooted cosmopolitanism” that Hannah Arendt identified with modern Jewish experience.<sup>100</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution to Modern Architecture*, 8, 16, 90.

<sup>2</sup> Rubinstein, “Jewish Top Wealth-Holders,” 136-37.

<sup>3</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 155-56.

<sup>4</sup> Endelman, “Aestheticism,” 122-36.

<sup>5</sup> Muthesius, *The Poetic Home*, 278-80.

<sup>6</sup> Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*, 291.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Hall, *The Victorian Country House*, 44.

<sup>8</sup> See Diana Davis’ essay in this special issue, as well as her forthcoming book with Getty Publications.

<sup>9</sup> Newton, *Victorian Designs*, 68-69, 72-73.

<sup>10</sup> Birnbaum, *Les fous de la République*.

<sup>11</sup> Stammers, “Catholics, Collectors and the Commune,” 53-87.

<sup>12</sup> Carey, *Theatres of Life*, 17-18.

<sup>13</sup> See the auction advert in *Surrey Mirror*, 25 June 1915. I am grateful to Elizabeth Steven for sharing her Worth Park research.

<sup>14</sup> Whiteley, “Collectors,” 54-58; Kisluk-Grosheide, Munger, *The Wrightsman Galleries*; Ford, “Buckland Park.”

<sup>15</sup> Cooper, *The Opulent Eye*, pl.11, pl.14, pl.91, pl.141, pl.151, pl.178, pl.180.

<sup>16</sup> Kuhrau, *Der Kunstsammler*, 9-19, 91-93.

<sup>17</sup> Allfrey, *The Prince of Wales*.

<sup>18</sup> Cited in Adam, 37-38.

<sup>19</sup> See Hall, “Le gout Rothschild,” 101-116.

<sup>20</sup> Cited in Mordaunt-Crook, *The Rise*, 63.

<sup>21</sup> Cited in Bryant, *The Wernher Collection*, 15.

<sup>22</sup> Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora*, 376.

<sup>23</sup> Musson, *The English Manor House*, 8.

<sup>24</sup> Gere, *Nineteenth-Century Decoration*, 334.

<sup>25</sup> Jarassé, *Existe-t-il un art juif?* 208.

<sup>26</sup> Kahan, *Music’s Modern Muse*, 3.

<sup>27</sup> For the contrasting views, see Cruz-Fernandez, ‘Isaac M. Singer, [<https://www.immigrantentrepreneurship.org/entry.php?rec=210>]. [please supply URL]

<sup>28</sup> Braddon, *Singer and the Sewing Machine*, 187.

<sup>29</sup> Ehrlich (ed.), *Encyclopaedia*, vol.II, 1139; Bedoire, *Jewish Contribution*, 434.

<sup>30</sup> Steinberg, *Jewish Mad Men*, 94-95.

<sup>31</sup> Saxton, “Singer,” 10, 12.

<sup>32</sup> Burk, *Old World*, 533.

<sup>33</sup> Flanders, *Consuming* 206-51; White, *The History of Torquay*, 185, 281-82; White, *The History or Torquay*, 185, 281-282.

<sup>34</sup> Hawthorne, *Oldway Mansion*, 15. I am very grateful to Paul Hawthorne for his assistance in researching and illustrating this article.

<sup>35</sup> Morris, *French Art* 202-03; Wilson, Mackley, *Creating Paradise*, 11, 63.

<sup>36</sup> Mordaunt-Crook, *Nouveaux-Riches*, 65; Girouard, *Victorian Country House*, 293-95

<sup>37</sup> Butterfield, *My West Riding Experiences*, 25-26.

<sup>38</sup> Girouard, *Life in the French Country House*, 316-17.

- 
- <sup>39</sup> Oswald, *Country Houses of Kent*, 42.
- <sup>40</sup> Girouard, *Victorian Country House*, 302.
- <sup>41</sup> Seccombe (revised Michael Reed), 'Albert Grant' [<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-11241>].
- <sup>42</sup> Hawthorne, *Oldway*, 9; Eastley, *The Singer Saga*, 35.
- <sup>43</sup> Pearson, *The People's Palaces*, 82, 103.
- <sup>44</sup> Hawthorne, *Oldway*, 15, 18.
- <sup>45</sup> Singer, "Memoirs of the late princesse", 111.
- <sup>46</sup> See Vottero, "Le salon," 51-52.
- <sup>47</sup> "Music in the French Salon," 108-09.
- <sup>48</sup> Braddon, *Singer*, 214.
- <sup>49</sup> Kahan, *Music's Modern Muse*, 102, 108, 117-18, 135.
- <sup>50</sup> Hawthorne, *Oldway*, 24, 27, 36-41, 43.
- <sup>51</sup> Jackson, Hinto, *The V&A Guide*, 110.
- <sup>52</sup> Morris, "Hopes and Fears," vol. XXII, 18.
- <sup>53</sup> Cited in Neiswander, *The Cosmopolitan Interior*, 58.
- <sup>54</sup> Cooper, *Opulent Eye*, 6-7; Lasc, *Interior Decorating*, 2.
- <sup>55</sup> Aslett, *The Last Country Houses*, 266, 269, 270.
- <sup>56</sup> Hawthorne, *Oldway*, 39.
- <sup>57</sup> Braddon, *Singer*, 219, 221.
- <sup>58</sup> Kahan, *Music's Modern Muse*, 442.
- <sup>59</sup> Peyrefitte, *Les juifs*, 146.
- <sup>60</sup> Gray, *Edwardian Architecture*, 158-59, 259; Jamilly, "Anglo-Jewish Architects," 139.
- <sup>61</sup> Binney, *The Ritz Hotel, London*, 2.
- <sup>62</sup> Lasic, "'Dignity and Graciousness,'" 202, 204, 207.
- <sup>63</sup> McNeil, Riello, *Luxury*, 141, 150.
- <sup>64</sup> Gray, *Edwardian Architecture*, 160.
- <sup>65</sup> See Stevenson, *Art & Aspirations*.
- <sup>66</sup> Mordaunt-Crook, *Nouveaux-Riches*, 47.
- <sup>67</sup> Leben, "Interiors by Georges Hoentschel," 48-54.
- <sup>68</sup> Imbert, *The Modernist Garden*, 1-9.
- <sup>69</sup> Duchêne, *Les jardins d'avenir*, 3, 12.
- <sup>70</sup> Duchêne, *Les jardins d'avenir*, 9.
- <sup>71</sup> Vanderbilt, *The Glitter and the Gold*, 143-44.
- <sup>72</sup> Hawthorne, *Oldway*, 31-32.
- <sup>73</sup> See Bouvet, "Roses pour un palais défunt," 21-26.
- <sup>74</sup> Bertrand, *Les curiosités esthétiques*, vol. I, 240-41.
- <sup>75</sup> Melanson, "The Decadent Interior," 133-34.
- <sup>76</sup> Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Les Rothschild*, 272.
- <sup>77</sup> Stammers, "Collectors, Catholics," 83-86; Kahan, *Music's Modern Muse*, 81-82.
- <sup>78</sup> See Dwyer, *Carolands*.
- <sup>79</sup> Girouard, *French Country House*, 316-23, 331.
- <sup>80</sup> Stevenson, *Art & Aspirations*, 5.
- <sup>81</sup> Mollot, *Les derniers châtelains*, 19, 22, 27, 30, 34.
- <sup>82</sup> Mollot, *Les derniers châtelains*, 58, 59, 61, 68.
- <sup>83</sup> Hoganson, "Cosmopolitan Domesticity," 55-83.
- <sup>84</sup> Craven, *Stanford White*, 83, 109.
- <sup>85</sup> Gregory, *The Gilded Age*, 120-21.
- <sup>86</sup> Cornforth, *The Inspiration*, 11.
- <sup>87</sup> See the provenance for the painting now at Versailles (Inv no: MV 7156).

- 
- <sup>88</sup> See Wildenstein, Stavrides, *Marchands d'art*; Kostyrko, *The Journal*.  
<sup>89</sup> Secrest, Duveen, 64-65, 100-101.  
<sup>90</sup> Hawthorne, *Oldway*, 67.  
<sup>91</sup> Banham, Porter, Macdonald, *Victorian Interior Design*, 204, 207.  
<sup>92</sup> Stuart Gray, *Edwardian Architecture*, 259  
<sup>93</sup> Secrest, *Duveen*, 86  
<sup>94</sup> Stephenson, "Edwardian Cosmopolitanism," 278.  
<sup>95</sup> Neiswander, *Cosmopolitan Interior*, 115-78; see also Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution*, 122.  
<sup>96</sup> Auslander, "Jewish Taste?" 299-331.  
<sup>97</sup> Shapira, *Style & Seduction*, 6.  
<sup>98</sup> Prévost-Marcilhacy, *Les Rothschild*, 180.  
<sup>99</sup> Curl, *Mizner's Florida*, 38.  
<sup>100</sup> Sznajder, *Jewish Memory*.

## References

- Adam, Andrew. 1993. *Beechwoods & Bayonets: The Book of Halton*. Buckingham: Barracuda Books.
- Allfrey, Anthony. 1991. *The Prince of Wales and His Jewish Court*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson.
- Aslett, Clive. 1982. *The Last Country Houses*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Auslander, Leora. 2002. "Jewish Taste? Jews and the Aesthetics of Everyday Life in Paris and Berlin, 1933-42". In *Histories of Leisure* (ed.) Rudy Koshar, 299-331. Oxford: Berg.
- Banham, Joanna and Julia Porter, Sally Macdonald. 1991. *Victorian Interior Design*. London: Studio Editions.
- Bedoire, Frédéric. 2004. *The Jewish contribution to modern architecture, 1830-1930*. Stockholm: Ktav Publishing House.
- Bertrand, Antoine. 1996. *Les curiosités esthétiques de Robert de Montesquiou*. 2 vols. Geneva: Droz.
- Binney, Marcus. 1999. *The Ritz Hotel, London*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Birnbaum, Pierre. 1992. *Les fous de la République: histoire politique des juifs d'état*. Paris: Fayard.
- Bouvet, Vincent. 1980. "Roses pour un palais défunt", *Monuments historiques* 108: 21-26.
- Braddon, Ruth. 1977. *Singer and the Sewing Machine: A Capitalist Romance*. London: Barrie & Jenkins.
- Bryant, Julius. 2002. *The Wernher Collection at Ranger's House*. London: English Heritage.
- Burk, Kathleen. 2007. *Old World New World: The Story of Britain and America*. London: Little Brown.
- Butterfield, Frederick WL. 1927. *My West Riding Experiences*. London: Ernest Benn.
- Carey, Juliet. 2008. *Theatres of Life: Drawings from the Rothschild Collection at Waddesdon Manor* London: Paul Holberton.
- Catalogue of the Library at Broomhill, Tunbridge Wells: the property of David Lionel Salomons*. 1916. London.
- Cooper, Nicholas, 1976. *The Opulent Eye: Late Victorian and Edwardian Taste in Interior Design*. London: Architectural Press.
- Cornforth, John. 1985. *The Inspiration of the Past: Country House Taste in the Twentieth Century*. London: Viking.
- Craven, Wayne. 2005. *Stanford White: Decorator in Opulence and Dealer in Antiquities*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cruz-Fernandez, Paula de la. 2014. "Isaac M. Singer, 1811-75", *Immigrant Entrepreneurship. German-American Business Biographies, 1720 to the Present* 2  
[\[https://www.immigrantentrepreneurship.org/entry.php?rec=210\]](https://www.immigrantentrepreneurship.org/entry.php?rec=210). URL please
- Curl, Donald. 1987. *Mizner's Florida: America Resort Architecture*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Duchêne, Achille. 1935. *Les jardins d'avenir: hier, aujourd'hui, demain*. Paris: Vincent, Fréa et Co.
- Dwyer, Michael Middleton. 2006. *Carolands: Ernest Sanson, Achille Duchêne, Willis Polk*. San Matteo: San Matteo County Historical Association.
- Eastley, Charles. 1983. *The Singer Saga*. Tiverton: Maslands.

- 
- Ehrlich, Mark Avram. 2009. *Encyclopaedia of the Jewish Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, Culture*. 3 vols. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO.
- Endelmann, Todd. 2002. *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Endelmann, Todd. 2015. "Aestheticism and the Flight from Jewishness". In *Visualizing Jews Through the Ages: Literary and Material Representations of Jewishness and Judaism* edited by Hannah Ewence, Helen Spurling, 122-36. London: Routledge.
- Flanders, Judith. 2006. *Consuming Passions: Leisure and Pleasure in Victorian Britain*. London: Harper Collins.
- Ford, David Nash. 2001. "Buckland Park", *Royal Berkshire History*. Nash Ford Publishing [online].
- Gere, Charlotte. 1989. *Nineteenth-Century Decoration: The Art of the Interior*. New York: Abrams.
- Girouard, Mark. 1979. *The Victorian Country House*. Revised Edition. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Girouard, Mark. 2000. *Life in the French Country House*. London: Cassell & Co.
- Gray, Alexander Stuart, *Edwardian Architecture*. London: Duckworth.
- Gregory, Alexis. 1993. *The Gilded Age: The Super-Rich of the Edwardian Era*. London: Cassell.
- Hall, Michael. 2009. *The Victorian Country House*. London: Aurum Press.
- Hall, Michael. 2014. "'Le gout Rothschild': The Origins and Influences of a Collecting Style". In *British Models of Art Collecting the American Response: Reflections across the Pond*, edited Inge Reist. Farnham, 101-116.
- Hawthorne, Paul. 2009. *Oldway Mansion: Historic Home of the Singer Family*. Paignton: Torbay Books.
- Hoganson, Kristin. 2002. "Cosmopolitan Domesticity: Importing the American Dream, 1865-1920." *American Historical Review* 107 (1): 55-83.
- Imbert, Dorothee. 1993. *The Modernist Garden in France*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Jackson, Anna and Morna Hinto. 2000. *The V&A Guide to Period Styles: 40 Years of British Art and Design*. London: V&A Publications.
- Jamilly, Edward. 1953-55. "Anglo-Jewish Architects and Architecture in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries." *Transactions (Jewish Historical Society of England)* 18: 127-41.
- Jarassé, Dominique. 2006. *Existe-t-il un art juif?* Paris: Éditions esthétiques du divers.
- Julius, Anthony. 2010. *Trials of the Diaspora: A History of Anti-Semitism in England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kahan, Sylvia. 2003. *Music's Modern Muse: A Life of Winnaretta Singer, Princesse de Polignac*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press.
- Kisluk-Grosheide, Danielle and Jeffrey Munger. 2010. *The Wrightsman Galleries for French Decorative Arts*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Kostyrko, Diana. 2017. *The Journal of a Transatlantic Art Dealer: René Gimpel (1918-39)*. Brepols: Turnhout.
- Kuhrau, Sven. 2005. *Der Kunstsammler im Kaiserreich: Kunst und Repräsentation in der Berliner Privatsammlerkultur*. Kiel: Ludwig Verlag.
- Lasc, Anca. 2018. *Interior Decorating in Nineteenth-Century France*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Lasic, Barbara. 2012. "'Dignity and Graciousness': Mewès and Davis and the Creation of 'Tous les Louis' Period Rooms." *Furniture History*, 48 (2012): 193-210.
- Leben, Ulrich. 2013. "Interiors by Georges Hoentschel: Salvaging Fragments of a Lost World". In *Salvaging the past: George Hoentschel and the French decorative arts at the Metropolitan museum of New York, 1907-2003*, edited by Danielle Kisluk-Grosheide, Deborah Krohn, Ulrich Leben, 48-54. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- McNeil, Peter and Giorgio Riello. 2016. *Luxury: A Rich History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Melanson, Elizabeth. 2015. "The Decadent Interior as Modern Lesbian Aesthetic." In *Designing the French Interior: The Modern Home and Mass Media*, edited by Anca Lasc, Georgina Downey, Mark Taylor, 131-42. London: Bloomsbury.
- Mollot, Emmanuel. 2008. *Les derniers châtelains de Rochefort-en-Yvelines, 1898-1921*. Société historique de Rochefort-en-Yvelines: SHR.

- 
- Mordaunt-Crook, John. 1999. *The Rise of the Nouveaux-Riches: Style and Status in Victorian and Edwardian Architecture*. London: John Murray.
- Morris, Edward. 2005. *French Art in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Morris, William. 2012. "Hopes and Fears for Art." In *The Collected Works of William Morris*, vol. XXII, 3-154. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Musson, Jeremy. 1999. *The English Manor House: From the Archives of Country Life*. London: Aurum Press.
- Muthesius, Stefan. 2009. *The Poetic Home: The Nineteenth-Century Domestic Interior*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Neiswander, Julia. 2008. *The Cosmopolitan Interior: Liberalism and the British Home, 1870-1914*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Newton, Charles. *Victorian Designs for the Home*. 1999. London: V&A Publications.
- Oswald, Arthur. 1933. *Country Houses of Kent*. London: Country Life.
- Pearson, Lynn. 1991. *The People's Palaces: The Story of Seaside Pleasure Buildings, 1870-1914*. London: Barracuda Books.
- Peyrefitte, Roger. 1965. *Les juifs*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Prévost-Marcilhacy, Pauline. 1995. *Les Rothschild, bâtisseurs et mécènes*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Ross, James. 2006. "Music in the French Salon." In *French Music since Berlioz*, edited by Caroline Potter, Richard Langham Smith (eds.), Ashgate, Farnham 2006): 91-116.
- Rubinstein, William. 2001. "Jewish Top Wealth-Holders in Britain, 1809-1909." *Jewish Studies* 37: 133-161.
- Saxton, William A. "Singer, the Sewing Machine and Paignton." *Brixham Museum and History Society: Occasional Lecture Paper no.6* (1983).
- Seccombe, Thomas (revised Michael Reed). "Albert Grant (formerly Abraham Gottheimer), Baron Grant in the Italian Nobility". In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-11241>]. URL please
- Secrest, Meryle. 2004. *Duveen: A Life in Art*. New York: Knopf.
- Shapira, Elana. 2016. *Style & Seduction: Jewish Patrons, Architecture and Design in Fin-de-siècle Vienna*. Waltham: Brandeis University Press.
- Singer, Winnaretta. 1945. "Memoirs of the Late princesse Edmond de Polignac." *Horizon* 12 (68): 111.
- Stammers, Tom. 2014. "Catholics, Collectors and the Commune: Heritage as Counter-Revolution." *French Historical Studies* 37 (1): 53-87.
- Steinberg, Kerri. 2015. *Jewish Mad Men: Advertising and the Designs of the American Jewish Experience*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Stephenson, Andrew. 2010. "Edwardian Cosmopolitanism, c.1901-1912." In *The Edwardian Sense: Art, Design and Performance in Britain, 1901-1910*, edited by Michael Hatt, Morna O'Neill, 251-84. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Stevenson, Michael. 2002. *Art & Aspirations: The Randlords of South Africa and Their Collections*. Vlaeberg: Fernwood Press.
- Surrey Mirror*, 25 June 1915.
- Sznaider, Natan. 2011. *Jewish Memory and the Cosmopolitan Order: Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Condition*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Vanderbilt, Consuelo. 2011. *The Glitter and the Gold*. London: Hodder.
- Vottero, Michaël. 2010. "Le salon de la princesse Edmond de Polignac." In *Femmes peintres et salons au temps de Proust: de Madeleine Lemaire à Berthe Morisot*. Paris: Hazan.
- White, J.T. 1878. *The History of Torquay*. Torquay: Directory Co.
- Whiteley, Jon. 2014. "Collectors of Eighteenth-Century French Art in London." In *Delicious Decadence: The Rediscovery of French Eighteenth-Century Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Monica Preti, Guillaume Faroult, Christophe Voghterr, 43-58. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Wildenstein, Daniel and Yves Stavrides. 1999. *Marchands d'art*. Paris: Plon.



---

Wilson, Richard and Alan Mackley. 2000. *Creating Paradise: The Building of the English Country House, 1660-1880*. London: Hambledon.